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**TESTIMONY RE: RAISED H.B. BILL 5653 An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern
to Children**

Children's Committee
February 5, 2015

Good Afternoon Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and esteemed members of the Children's Committee.

Thank-you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for nurses, in strong support of **RAISED H.B. BILL 5653 An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children.**

CNA is a founding partner of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut.

I am Mary Jane M Williams PhD, RN Chair of the Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association, a founding member of the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE) an ongoing member of the Steering Committee and immediate past Chair of the Policy and Advocacy Committee for ANHE.

I speak in strong support of **RAISED H.B. BILL 5653 An Act Concerning Children's PRODUCT'S AND CHEMICALS OF HIGH CONCERN.**

We don't know what the triggers are to the incidence of disease onset. We are beginning to develop a strong body of knowledge that establishes cause and effect.

However, until we have multiple, well grounded research, we need to apply the Precautionary Principle that states,

“When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of the activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of the proof. The process of applying the precautionary principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must involve an examination of a full range of alternatives, including no action.”

(Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle, Jan. 1998).

Therefore we must ask the ultimate questions:

What do we do with the knowledge we have related to chemicals in our environment?

How do we protect the public we serve with the goal of “Doing No Harm”?

If there is growing consensus that our exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products is a risk factor for many serious diseases, including cancers, we are charged as health professionals and legislators to take action that will avert the exposure to these unsafe potentially deadly chemicals. We do know that for people in the US under the age of twenty, Cancer is the 2nd most common cause of death and that the Incidence of childhood cancers has increased by more than 20% between 1975 and 1990 (particularly leukemia and brain cancers.)

Legislative “lack of action” has a direct impact on the children in our communities and their families. We are asking that the “Precautionary Principle” be applied and that Connecticut be proactive in banning hazardous chemicals, which are found in an array of children’s product. All of these chemicals are potentially harmful to children and their

healthy development. Phasing out as many chemicals of concern as possible is essential to the health of our children.

This proposed legislation requires DPH to identify chemicals of concern to children based on toxicity and exposure hazard and to make recommendations for action to the legislature every 2 years. It represents progress in the right direction aimed at protecting our children. There is no cost to the Department and CT businesses that use identified chemicals can work with the Chemical Innovations Institute to find safer alternatives. In fact, this may advance green chemistry innovation in the State and ultimately if a "Cost Benefit Analysis" were effectively applied, better health results in lower health care expenditures.

Nursing practice focuses on public health, wellness and education. This legislation provides a tool for CT citizens to make safe choices for themselves and their families! This legislation is about protecting our children, our future generation, as well as the public. "It is about the protecting health of the public."

Thank you for your time. We strongly urge the committee to vote favorably to support **RAISED H.B. BILL 5653 An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children**

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and for your continued effort to protect the public health of Connecticut residents.

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